very pleasant flat," he answered, speaking as if to himself.

"I expect as soon as she died another of Vecchio's protégées took it over," the Duke said sarcastically.

"And the child would have been sent to live with the servants," the Ambassador finished.

"I was so . . frightened," Luella interposed, "that he would have to return . . there."

"You need no longer worry about him," the Ambassador assured her. "As I have already told His Grace, Vecchio will be dealt with immediately, so that this sort of thing can never happen again."

Luella's eyes widened. "How . . will you . . prevent it?" she asked.

"Quite easily," the Ambassador replied. "We have, in Milan, known of his activities for a long time, but he was always clever enough to leave no evidence, and always covered his tracks."

"What you are saying is that . . now you have the . . letter and the . . fraudulent marriage certificate!" Luella exclaimed.

"I have those," His Excellency said, "and I also have the evidence which His Grace has given me."

"Then . . you do not . . need mine?" Luella enquired.

The Ambassador shook his head. "His Grace is anxious that you should not be brought into this unsavoury affair, and I agree with him. In fact, to save the good name of Milan, the case against Vecchio will be held in private. Nothing will be allowed to get into the press."

He paused before he went on: "I am, however, convinced that long before the case comes to trial Vecchio will disappear, perhaps to the East, or to Africa, and we shall never be troubled by him again."

"Oh . . I hope . . that is what . . happens!" Luella cried.

"It will, my dear young lady, I am almost certain of it!" the Ambassador said. He smiled at Luella, then looked towards the Duke. "I am sure you will understand, Your Grace," he said, "that I want to take my son home with me now."

"But of course," the Duke agreed. "Yours is obviously the higher claim."

The Ambassador laughed. "I want to see my wife's face when I give her a replica of myself." He walked across the room to where Enrico was still busy with his train. He put out his hand and said in Italian: "Will you come with me, Enrico? I will give you a bigger train than that, and it will go by itself when you wind it up."

"A bigger train?" Enrico repeated. " 'Rico would like that."

"Come along then," the Ambassador said. "We will buy it on our way home."

"Buy it now?" Enrico enquired as if to make certain he had heard aright.

"We will go to the shop in my carriage," the Ambassador promised.

Enrico gave a little skip for joy. Taking him by the hand, the Ambassador started to lead him towards the door. Enrico bent down to pick up his engine. " 'Rico bring this one too," the little boy said.